

Views of the United States of America on the Internet Governance Forum (IGF)

The United States reiterates its commitment to the results of the WSIS and, in particular, to the convening of the IGF. In order for the IGF to realize its full potential, we believe that it is critical to ensure that all stakeholders from the Internet community participate in the event and its planning on an equal footing.

The IGF should offer an opportunity for leading Internet experts from around the world to share experiences and offer visions that support the continued evolution and expansion of the Internet. Consequently, the issue of the use of information and communication technologies to advance development should be at the heart of these discussions. One possible approach to the IGF would involve a series of panels composed of innovators, scholars and industry leaders from around the world who could debate Internet-related policy matters such as the free flow of information, capacity building, expanded Internet access, cyber security, spam and privacy.

The United States believes that the IGF should be a truly multi-stakeholder event; therefore, it is important that it not be encumbered by extensive, existing United Nations processes and procedures. Attendance and participation in the IGF should be open to a broad array of stakeholders, including governments, business entities, civil society, scientists, and inter-governmental organizations. Linkages to the UN should be minimal in terms of procedures and the IGF should avoid burdensome preparatory processes. The secretariat should be small, with the mission to support the smooth functioning of the IGF and to facilitate broad participation in the event. Finally, a multi-stakeholder Bureau will be extremely important to act as a program committee and to offer input as to discussion topics, speakers and format.

The promise of the IGF -- an open and inclusive dialogue amongst all stakeholders of the international Internet community to discuss critical issues concerning the future of the Internet -- is viewed by the United States as a positive development. We look forward to a successful inaugural meeting of the IGF in Athens, Greece later this year.